

REMARKS

A needed formal change is made in the specification.

The claims have been amended as to formal matters, so as to address all of the issues raised by the Examiner in the Official Action.

Claims 1 and 2 have been cancelled and replaced by new claims 18 and 19, which are believed to be proper as to form and clearly patentable over the cited references.

Reconsideration is accordingly respectfully requested, for the rejection of the claims as anticipated by or unpatentable over CLARK, JR. et al. (hereinafter CLARK), alone or in view of NIAURA et al. or FERNANDEZ et al. or STOLL.

The rejection falls down on CLARK.

Of course, CLARK was cited in our specification as prior art and discussed and distinguished therein. Therefore, this application was filed with full awareness of the distinctions between the present invention and CLARK.

In CLARK, there is a housing 32 which appears to be a box or a casing that would give no support to the worm 30.

Moreover, the housing 32 cannot be called a "bore" within the meaning of the present invention. According to the present invention, a "bore" is something which surrounds the worm sufficiently closely as to give the worm support should the worm be deflected in the course of its interaction with the toothed

wheel. This is made plain by our specification, which accordingly imparts patentable weight to the term "bore".

Moreover, we now recite, in new basic claim 18, the relationship of the bore to the worm, such that the bore has a diameter sufficiently close to that of the worm that the worm is maintained in a radial direction with respect to the toothed wheel throughout its length and is consequently able to take up stresses exerted on it by the toothed wheel in a radial direction without any damage.

There is nothing like this in CLARK.

Claim 2 (now claim 19) is similarly not anticipated by or rendered obvious by CLARK, for the reasons given above.

As to claim 3, retained with only a formal change, the worm 30 is normally driven by drive 39 through a shaft 40 (auxiliary motor 34 and clutch 36 are not normally used), at a greater speed than the speed of the worm wheel 26, so as to avoid any locking of this worm wheel 26 on the worm 30.

For this drive, the device comprises a left-hand clutch face 50 and a right-hand clutch face 54 coacting with respective clutch plates 60, 61 on the worm shaft, and compression springs 52 and 53 for positioning the clutch faces. The goal of this mechanism is to avoid the problem of gear backlash and slippage which would cause the worm wheel to lock on the worm in case of the increased speed of the worm wheel.

The springs 52 and 53 and bumpers 58 and 59 are thus not made to dampen an axial movement of the worm caused by an overload transmitted by the worm wheel 26, and are not comparable to the energy absorption/dissipation means according to the invention.

The secondary references do nothing to improve CLARK with respect to the features discussed above, and so need not be discussed in detail at this time.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, therefore, it is believed that this application has been placed in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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